



HMIe SCHOOL INSPECTION

February 2009

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

MEIKLEMILL

PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONTENTS

	Page No
1. The School	2
2. Particular strengths of the school	2
3. How well do young people learn and achieve?	2 - 3
4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?	4
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?	4
6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?	4
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?	5
8. Main Points for Action – HMle Report 31 October 2006	5
Quality Indicators	6

1. The school

Meiklemill Primary serves the southern part of the town of Ellon. The roll is currently 198 including 34 nursery.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The quality of teaching and the very strong emphasis given to children's learning through stimulating practical contexts.
- The behaviour of children and the enthusiastic attitude to learning across the school.
- The development of pupils' achievement in citizenship, enterprise and health.
- The teamwork and commitment of staff.
- Partnership with parents, and strong links with the community and its resources to enrich children's learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher and distributed leadership throughout the school.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

In the nursery, children are forming friendships and cooperate with each other during play activities. Most children are interested in the activities and can persevere and concentrate on tasks for an extended period of time. Children's literacy and numeracy skills are developing well. They enjoy listening to stories as part of a group and are beginning to recognise their own name in print. New initiatives such as Talking Boxes (artefacts and resources from projects are put into a box and children then reflect and talk about their learning) have had a very positive impact. Big book floor planning allows children to be involved and take the lead in their own learning. The new outdoor learning resource planned by the nursery staff allows the children to actively engage in many outdoors and environmental experiences.

In primary classes, almost all children are motivated and work well with others to tackle tasks set by staff. Children are making very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who need additional help with their learning are making very good progress towards their targets. Children listen well to adults and each other when working with a partner or in groups. Listening and talking is given a high priority throughout the school. In the middle and upper stages, children talk with confidence and give presentations and talks using PowerPoint.

Very good attainment in reading has been maintained. There is currently a focus on encouraging boys to read which is having a positive impact. Book detectives is established throughout the school with all classes taking part. The P1 and P2 classes successfully use homework Book Bags to motivate pupil and parent shared reading. Writing has been a focus in the upper stages with the enthusiastic P6 class making very good progress, through using ICT and the MYST virtual world resource. Standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting continues to be high.

Active learning is evidenced in mathematics and numeracy. Cross cutting themes such as Hadrian's Wall in Primary 4 and Katie Morag in P2 are used as contexts for measurement and money. Remote control cars provide motivation for Primary 5 in shape, position and movement. P2 share their active learning in maths with parents using their new Maths Games packs for homework. From nursery onwards, information and communications technology skills are developing very well. Every class has a digital camera which is used regularly to record evidence for assessment and achievement folders. Games-based learning using virtual contexts is beginning to be embedded in the middle and upper stages.

At all stages children are developing effective enterprise skills through whole school events, for example St Andrew's Week, Burns Day, World Book Day and technology challenge days. All classes plan enterprising activities, for example the Bags2school collection by the P5 class for their trip to Stirling, the P7 class's Year Book and War memories book and the Scottish recipe books made by all classes. The P3 class is currently organising an exciting Egyptian Museum for parents and friends. Children have also been enterprising in their citizenship work in raising funds for a Rotary Club water project in Kenya, Comic Relief and Children In Need. Citizenship is further encouraged through the school supporting local and national charities, for example the Nursery's Barnardo's Toddle, P7's donation to BLESMA during their WWII topic, P4's Blue Peter Shoe Appeal and P3's Beetle Drive for Africa. An exciting Canadian school link is currently being developed by the P7 class with ICT being used to share high standards of pupil work. Children enjoy taking part in after-school sport activities which include football, badminton, netball, Hip-Hop and hockey.

The school is very well placed to develop Health and Wellbeing across all stages. A planned healthy living programme, health issues aligned to topic work, a broad and varied Health Week and whole- school focused events – such as Jump Rope for Heart, Go For It Walk to School and a healthy snack house point scheme ensure pupils experience a range of learning opportunities.

4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?

A focused survey on homework showed that parents were very happy with the active approach at Meiklemill School. As a result of the survey, a leaflet for parents was made on how to support their children with homework.

Staff work well with a range of visiting specialist teachers. They have effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies including the police liaison officer, health and social work, the local ranger service- for example all classes undertook environmental experiences in the local area during Eco Week - the sports co-ordinator and the two school chaplains. The supportive Parent Council offers helpful advice as new policies and procedures are prepared. Staff keep parents very well informed of learning outcomes covered in class, homework expectations and other activities through class weekly newsletters and whole school curriculum and parents' newsletters. Communication with parents is of a high standard and working in partnership is very important across the school. Effective procedures are in place to ensure transitions from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary school are smooth. There are clear systems in place to ensure that any complaints are recorded and dealt with promptly.

5. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff work very well together to improve the school. They contribute enthusiastically and lead initiatives such as Glow to develop the work of the school. Staff are open and honest in their evaluation of provision and cooperate to bring about improvement. Children undertake a range of responsibilities such as Primary 7 Buddies, being part of an eco committee and as road safety officers. The pupil council meets on a regular basis. Children have identified the need for improvement playground games and have ordered new resources. Nursery children reported to the pupil council that there was litter on the river bank and the pupil council have written to the Community Council. Pupils' views are sought through surveys on issues such as bullying.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

Children learn in a caring and very supportive environment. Children are polite and well behaved. There are very positive relationships between staff and children. Staff treat children fairly and are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. Children's achievements are celebrated in class and at assembly. There are appropriately high expectations of all children in attainment and achievement, and in behaviour.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The highly motivated staff provide high quality learning experiences. They are confident when trying out new approaches to teaching and learning. A staff information bulletin based on learning and teaching and the school vision is issued weekly by the headteacher. Communication in the school is very good. When problems arise the headteacher works openly with others to find solutions. The depute headteachers carry out their roles well and provide very good support across the school in learning and teaching. Very effective procedures are in place to track children's progress. The management team, staff and pupils are all actively involved in identifying the school's strengths and the areas it wants to improve. They are well placed to implement their plans for further improvement.

8. Main Points for Action – HMle Report 31 October 2006

1. To improve the security of the playground, and upgrade the toilet facilities for disabled pupils.

Aberdeenshire Council's Health and Safety department undertook an audit soon after the initial inspection and no specific need was highlighted regarding security. However, the headteacher opted to provide an additional playground auxiliary from the school's own budget to support pupil supervision around the school. The disabled toilet already in school was deemed to be appropriate for the size and roll of the school.

2. To continue to develop rigour in evaluating the work of the school, building on the well-developed processes already in place.

An effective quality assurance policy and a programme for self evaluation based on the quality indicators in How Good is our School is in place. Self-evaluation continues to be central to all work undertaken in Meiklemill School. Best practice is used to inform improvements in learning and teaching. Staff are involved in reflective and systematic self-evaluation, for the specific purpose of improving the quality of children's experiences and raising attainment. Positive steps are taken to gather the views of parents, pupils and others about the quality of service provided by the school, and effective action is taken in response to these and other comments. The Parent Council, pupils and other stakeholders help to identify school strengths, development needs and planning priorities. PDRS and EDRS are well embedded. School budgets are managed in line with national and local guidance. The headteacher has a very clear vision for improving the school and takes account of the views of all stakeholders.

Quality Indicators

QI		Level
QI 1.1	Improvements in performance	5
QI 2.1	Learners'/children's experiences	5
QI 5.1	The curriculum	5
QI 5.3	Meeting learning needs	5
QI 5.9	Improvements through self-evaluation	5